

June 27, 2005
Work Session- Budget

Minutes

Members present

D.C. Swaim- Chairman
Brady Wooten- Vice- Chairman
Leon Casstevens- Commissioner
Kim Clark Phillips- Commissioner
Allen Sneed- Commissioner

Others Present

Cecil E. Wood- County Manager
Melinda Vestal-Clerk to the Board

Chairman Swaim called the recessed meeting back to order.

Mr. Wood reviewed the county's big concerns; education, public safety, next year's tax rate, salaries and the cuts made to the departments.

Commissioner Wooten asked if all departments received the same percentage in salaries?

Mr. Wood stated yes, the COLA is the same for all employees.

Commissioner Phillips explained the EMS budget amendment and salaries.

The Board asked about some line items.

***Commissioner Sneed made the motion to allow two commissioners and the county manager to travel out of state, if necessary. He would like this added to the travel policy. Commissioner Wooten seconded.**

Commissioner Phillips questioned if the Board was going to review every page of the budget.

The Board voted 4-1. Commissioner Phillips opposed.

Commissioner Phillips stated she would like to bring the school loan back to the table.

Commissioner Casstevens stated the money for the loan is already in the budget.

The Board discussed the school loan.

Commissioner Wooten inquired about the appropriation for Hoots Hospital. Is the \$200,000 a cap?

Mr. Wood responded yes.

Commissioner Wooten asked why each department did not cut 6% from their budgets?

Mr. Wood stated there is the difference in county dollars and mandated programs, but the county dollars cut was the same for each department.

Commissioner Wooten inquired about the DSS budget.

Mr. Wood stated that \$1.45 million is county dollars.

Mr. Wood stated the budget is extremely tight. He reminded the Board that it takes \$2.5 million a month to run the county.

The Board discussed data processing. All major expenditures are to be approved by Mr. Goad.

The Board discussed job positions in the county.

Commissioner Phillips asked what would be the perfect world?

Mr. Wood stated he would like to put the \$1.8 million back in the budget but that would require a 9 cent tax increase. He would like to have more money to put back to address the major concerns the county is or will face in the near future. He discussed bonds and how financiers look at the county. Mr. Wood stated putting \$1.3 million back in the budget would bring the county down to a "B" level and \$850,000 would cover the Sheriff, EMS, schools and other critical areas. The \$850,000 would mean a 4.5 to 5 cent tax increase.

Mr. Wood discussed the collection of back taxes.

Chairman Swaim stated the Board has met four nights and is no closer to passing the budget. He told the Board they have seen the figures and now the question is where does the Board want to start? Are we going to change the tax rate? The people who spoke at the public hearing stated they wanted the services.

Commissioner Casstevens stated Mr. Wood has done a good job on the budget and he is for leaving the budget as presented.

The Board discussed the appropriation for Hoots Hospital.

Commissioner Phillips stated we are elected leaders and a decision has to be made- how much are going to set the tax rate?

Chairman Swaim called for a break.

***Commissioner Phillips made the motion to set the tax rate at .73 cents.
Motion died due to lack of second**

***Commissioner Casstevens made the motion to leave the tax rate .68 cents with the reval. Commissioner Sneed seconded.**

Commissioner Phillips stated we are to suppose to help the county. We cannot cut services. All of the departments have been cut to the bare necessities. The Board is not doing their job. All those who spoke at the public hearing, except three people, wanted to keep the services and urged the Board to raise taxes. This action is very irresponsible of the Board.

**Chairman Swaim amended the motion to add that additional money be taken from the general fund to keep services at the same level.
Amendment died due to lack of second.**

Commissioner Phillips stated keeping the rate at .68 cents still constitutes an increase in taxes due to reval.

The Board voted 2-3. Commissioners Phillips, Swaim and Wooten opposed.

Commissioner Casstevens questioned Commissioner Wooten's vote. He asked at what rate did he want to set the tax rate?

Commissioner Wooten stated he wanted to review the budget more.

Commissioner Sneed stated the schools are very important. The Sheriff has officers in the schools who keep the schools safe and they have a trust with students. He has made efforts to change the budget to keep the SROs. He stated there is money in the landfill budget for the old landfill. ***Commissioner Sneed made the motion to cut the money in half (\$100,000) which has been set aside for the old landfill and move it the general fund. The funds will be allocated to the Sheriff's office. Commissioner Casstevens seconded. The Board voted 2-3. Commissioners Swaim, Phillips and Wooten opposed.**

Recess

***Commissioner Casstevens made the motion to recess until Thursday, June 27th at 7:00 and attempt to finalize the budget. Commissioner Sneed seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**